



Egypt's Economy
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Egyptian American Report



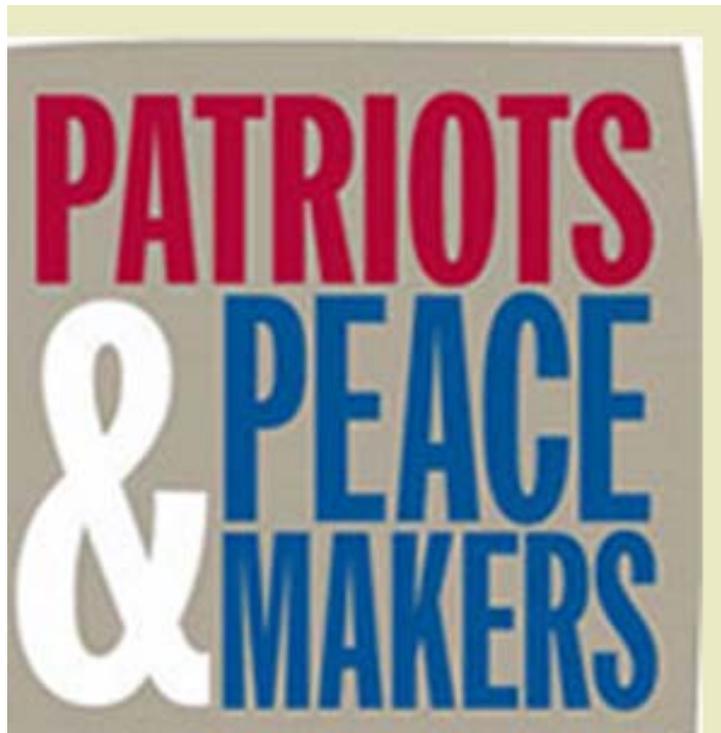
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UPCOMING EXHIBITION

PATRIOTS & PEACEMAKERS: ARAB AMERICANS IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY

February 16 – April 14 @ Japanese American National Museum



<http://www.janm.org/exhibits/patriots-and-peacemakers/>
http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/patriots.and.peacemakers_janm



Layaly el Ons. . .

*"In Arab culture, the merger between music and emotional transformation is epitomized by the concept of **tarab**, which may not have an exact equivalent in Western languages."*

Dr. A. J. Racy. **Making Music in the Arab World: The Culture and Artistry of Tarab.**



On Saturday, November 10, 2012, the EAO organized an evening of "tarab" and "ons" at the "Clubhouse" in Newport Beach. The reception was meant to present the opportunity to EAO members to meet and mingle with the cast of *The Country Within* and to honor and recognize their contributions to our community.

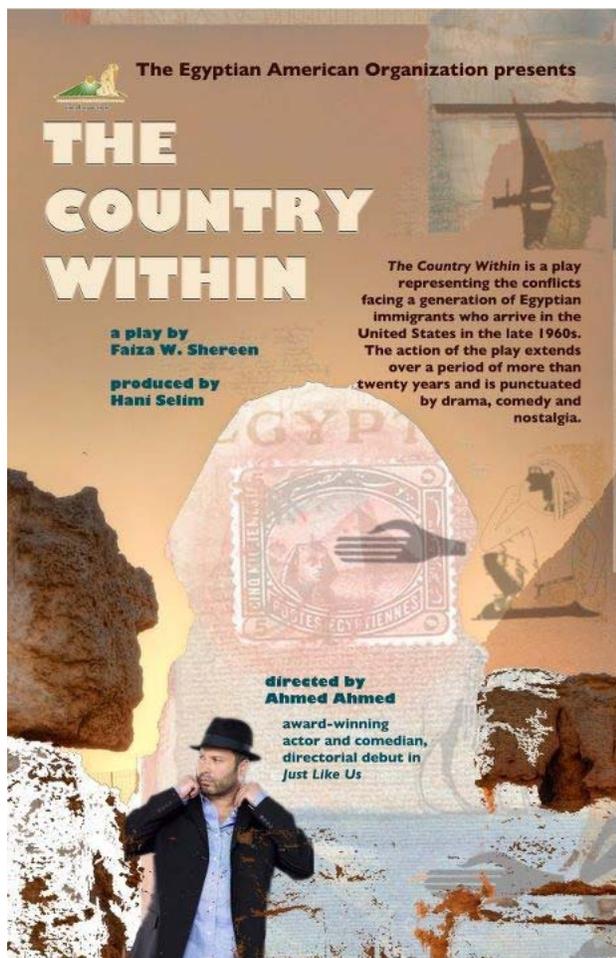
Mr. Wahid Boctor, then chair of the EAO, presented certificates of recognition to the members of the cast who were present, as well as to several community volunteers who supported the project from a managerial perspective.

The dinner surpassed the usual fair, as the dishes were provided by individual members--each of the ladies bringing their own specialty. The most delightful aspect of the event, however, was the live music generously contributed by Sami Asmar and two members of his ensemble. To the notes of Mohamed Abdel Wahab's music, the audience responded nostalgically by participating in a chorus of song (and dance), and a general sense of camaraderie and well-being infused the atmosphere.



The Country Within

"What have we done to our children! My God, when I think of it!" cries Ibrahim Morsy, an Egyptian immigrant who, having left his aging parents in a remote village near Tanta more than a quarter century earlier, finds himself struggling with internal conflicts about the marriage of his beloved daughter to the son of a fellow Egyptian American immigrant. His American wife points out to him that he has no cause to object, his daughter having "luckily" fallen in love with someone who fulfils all the "rules" and "requirements" he had set down for her. Why does Ibrahim struggle? Are his conflicts limited to immigrants or are they universal to parenting?



The Country Within, a play about the trials and tribulations of Egyptian immigrants in the United States, but also about "the human heart's capacity to bridge time and cross boundaries" was brought to The Barclay Theatre in Irvine on September 29 in a production sponsored by the Egyptian American Organization. The cast and the crew consisted of both professionals and volunteers who took ownership and worked together as a committed team. Ayman Samman, who played the role of Ibrahim Morsy, summarized many of the actors' feelings in his statement: "the story of Ibrahim is my story." Samman's rendition brought Ibrahim Morsy to life, as Amro Salama's portrayal of Omar Amin, the embittered aristocrat, underscored the isolating cynicism of this last in his (Salama's) powerfully controlled eloquence. And Sam Blan, with ease and calm distance suited to his character, represented Samir Mansour, the third male immigrant, a hard-working man of practical wisdom. Against Ibrahim, Omar, and Samir, the female protagonists, Nadia Amin and Aida Mansour were rendered with grace and humor by Nicole Haddad and and Nidah Barber. It would not be accurate to leave out of this brief description the contributions of those who represented the American-born second generation and the secondary characters: Silvi Sebastian, Zahra

Heydari, and many others (all of Middle Eastern background) brought degrees of their own experience to the comic and the dramatic levels of the play.

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El-Erian On Egypt and the Economy



A critical and analytical article, "Egypt's Economic Siren" by Mohamed El-Erian, appeared on February 7 in [Project Syndicate: A World of Ideas](#). Dr. El-Erian's argument sounds an alarm concerning this post-revolutionary period, urging for a more collaborative approach to solving Egypt's problems. He enumerates seven serious consequences that could negatively affect the country, should no heed be given to the call for collaborative action. These include a crippling inflation and a budgetary crisis possibly leading to stifling controls and black markets; a resurgence of revolutionary elements demanding accountability from the present government and extending the transition to peaceful progress; a general malaise resulting from the lack of sound security and the rise in criminal activity; the inevitable need and increasing difficulty of securing loans from the International Monetary Fund and other sources; and, finally, the sad reality that Egypt's economic potential far exceeds current performances. Indeed, this writer is aware that this has historically been the case; however, the gap between the potential and the performance has never been greater. It is enough to think of the destruction of the tourism industry that results from the current divisive and insecure conditions.

El-Erian notes that Egypt's current status is not unique. In its pivotal position, transitioning from a repressive past to "a better and more just future," Egypt is not "the first country to combine an uncertain political transition with worrisome economic and financial conditions." He therefore advises that Egypt's leadership use the lessons learned from history, citing four important nations with comparable issues: "South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia, and Turkey – whose combined experience is relevant and would resonate among many segments of the Egyptian population when it comes to orderly economic and political transitions."

Dr. El-Erian's positive and forward-looking approach is clearly affirmed in the conclusion of the article that reminds us that the "empowerment of ordinary Egyptians has fundamentally changed things." Egypt will no longer accept repression and the denial of legitimate aspirations. But, "with enlightened leadership and constructive cooperation, Egypt can overcome its current troubles."

Read the article at:

<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/completing-the-egyptian-revolution-by-mohamed-a--el-erian#m1iZHKILYxUCp6Hz.99>

The Country Within, Cont.

Members of the community who volunteered in major as well as minor roles amazed the audiences with their talents. Amany El Ghamrawy, Virginia Ghoniem, Samar Aziz, and the delightful engagement of Egyptian American youth (Yusef Abdellatif, Remy Selim, Omar Elfiky, Aly Elfiky, and Amel Sakr) reminded us of the value of projects that draw the community together. In retrospect, everyone remembers different scenes or lines of the play--but we all remember the comic relief provided by Sherif El Wakil's lively rendition of Hisham Mansour and the "zaffah" performed to the live music provided by Sami Asmar.



Asked about the performance, Faiza Shereen, author of *The Country Within*, remarked that only the text belonged to her, that credit for the success of The Barclay performances goes to director, C. Julian White, his crew, and the cast. The EAO appreciates all the hard work these people put in, steered and guided by producer, Hani Selim. Two performances--at 1:00 pm and 7:00 pm brought nearly 700 people to the theater. The event marked a milestone in EAO community programs in its magnitude and reach. Thanking the board, Dr. Yahya El Sanadidi, founding member of the

Egyptian American Organization remarks: "You have achieved a new milestone for the EAO! A milestone in terms of presence and impact in the communities that relate to Egypt and Egyptian Americans, a milestone in scale including total monetary cost, human effort, and not the least the involvement of new people who have not been with us in recent EAO events and activities." The audience included many Egyptian Americans, the greater Arab American community, and other ethnic groups. We were honored by the presence of Mayor Sukhee Kang, his excellency, Mr. El Hussein Abdel Wahab, Egyptian Consul General in L.A., and other notables whose interest in our community was enhanced by a sense of identification with themes and issues treated in the play.

Sharing Our Culture: Outreach to Local Community

"The Passion of Egypt: A Cultural Odyssey" was presented at the Yorba Linda public library in partnership with the Egyptian American Organization on May 26, 2012. The event was meant to bring exposure of our great culture to the local community and to correct misconceptions. The event was a hit, attracting an audience which filled the entire library! We received excellent feedback from members of the audience who found the content of the event to be both extremely educational and entertaining. Dr. Faiza Shereen and Laila Shereen Sakr provided lectures on the history of Egypt from Pharaonic times to present day events, leading up to the January 25 2010 revolution and its recent aftermath. Following the lectures, the audience had an opportunity to interact with the event organizers and enjoy the Egyptian art, tapestries, informative posters, and delicious food and drink provided graciously by members of the Egyptian community. Many thanks go to the group effort led by Tammy Shindiyy which made this event a great success.

General Assembly 2012 and Guest of Honor

Following EAO's annual General Assembly meeting on November 17, 2012, where three new additions to the Board were announced: Dr. Adel Eldahmy, Mona Ibrahim, and Dr. Ahmed Shereen, Jr, a presentation of Hesham Abdel Hamid 's film, "No to Dictorships" was showcased. A silent docudrama, "No" cries out against all forms of political oppression, religious extremism, and sectarian sedition. The film was cleverly done, using excerpts from documentaries and references to historical figures. The recipient of numerous awards, both nationally in Egypt and internationally, Hesham Abdel Hamid is an actor, director, and producer of feature films, as well as in theatre and television. The event was held at the Embassy Suites Brea Hotel, where the Pharaonic decor appropriately welcomed our guests!

